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Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Haven Appleton

OCT. 16, 1815

NOV. 15, 1890



CINCINNATI
ROBERT CLARKE & CO.

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At the annual meeting of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, December 1, 1890, I read a brief sketch of Miss Appleton's life. At the request of the Society, this sketch, somewhat enlarged, is now published.

EUGENE F. BLISS.

CINCINNATI,

APRIL 15, 1891.



MEMOIR.

Elizabeth Haven Appleton was born in England, at Wavertree, a suburb of Liverpool, October 16, 1815. Her father was William Greenleaf Appleton, in the sixth generation from that Samuel Appleton whose name first occurs in the records of New England in the year 1636. Her mother was Ann Hall Adams, a cousin of John Quincy Adams, sixth President of the United States. Of the Appleton family Mr. W. H. Whitmore says in the *American Genealogist*, Albany, 1875: "The Appletons rank among the few of our settlers who were of the recognized gentry of England. Many of the Massachusetts colonists were of gentle blood, but only as the junior branches of such families. A few of the leaders in the immigration were of position and importance at home, and among these was Samuel Appleton. He was the fourth son of Thomas Appleton, of Waldingford, who represented a family which had been settled there from at least the year 1499. There is no question either as to the identity of the emigrant or his pedigree. . . . The family has since

maintained its position and has furnished many able members of the community."

At the time of Miss Appleton's birth her father was resident in Liverpool as agent or factor for several merchants of Baltimore. He did not remain abroad very long, but, returning to this country, he settled in Baltimore, where were born his other five children. His eldest child received her name, Elizabeth Haven, from her mother's mother, daughter of Dr. Samuel Haven, minister at Portsmouth, N. H., for more than a half-century. From Baltimore in 1829 her father removed to Wheeling, and three years later in the fall of 1832 he came to Cincinnati, when his eldest daughter was seventeen years old. Here he remained nearly two years. He was engaged in the manufacture of white wax, having left the East under the impression that the climate of the Ohio Valley with its larger number of fine days would be more favorable to his business. On account of the haziness of our climate, however, he found that the total actinic force of the sun was less here than in the East, this too before the era of smoke. It may be interesting to observe that her father's house, still standing, which Miss Appleton pointed out to me several years ago, was in Bank street near the canal, with garden and orchard running back to what is now Dayton street. She has often spoken to me of walking to town by the tow-path. Her cousin, Mr. Cranch, tells me that to visit her father's house in the evening was somewhat of a daring feat, so fierce were the dogs to be encountered upon the way.

In her education I think Miss Appleton was little influenced

by any school she attended ; of her teachers I have heard of only one, Caroline Lee Hentz, whose novels were in repute forty years ago, and who for a time had a school for girls in this city. I am not aware that Miss Appleton was in any way much affected by her. For her education she was indebted to herself alone.

In 1833 her mother died, and the care of the household with its younger children fell upon Miss Appleton. The sense of duty, always the strongest point in her character, became at once apparent, and so far as she could she tried to fill her mother's place. This was no easy task, but she surprised her friends by her skill and tact. At this time she was about eighteen years old. I have not learned why Mr. Appleton left Cincinnati. Perhaps, disappointment in business, or grief at the loss of his wife, or both combined, induced him to go to Boston. There in 1835 he married his cousin, Miss Greenleaf. In time there was friction perhaps between the step-mother and the eldest daughter. At any rate about the year 1840 Miss Appleton left home and for a year or two, with Miss Abby Osgood as partner, taught school in New Bedford, Mass.

In 1842 she was invited by Nathaniel Holmes Morison, of Baltimore, to teach in his school for girls and with him she remained until 1848. By a singular coincidence Mr. Morison's death preceded Miss Appleton's by ten hours only. What other acquaintances she may have made in Baltimore I know not, but Mrs. Mowatt, at the time a famous actress, became her warm friend. Several years afterward Miss Appleton was bridesmaid for Mrs. Mowatt at her marriage in Richmond to



Mr. Ritchie. During this visit she met Henry A. Wise, who a year later was chosen governor of Virginia; he talked to her upon the right of secession, when she exclaimed, "Why, this is treason!" Miss Appleton was sincerely attached to Mrs. Mowatt, but I am afraid the friendship of the actress manifested more warmth than judgment.

I would not venture to say why Miss Appleton left Baltimore. Possibly a tale written long subsequently for the *Atlantic Monthly*, called "A Half-Life and Half a Life," may throw light upon this subject, but this is mere conjecture. Between her life in Baltimore and her coming to Cincinnati in 1849 a year was passed in the South, at Aiken, Georgia, I believe.

At this time, and for many years afterward, Mr. Lyman Harding had a school for girls in Cincinnati. In this school Miss Appleton was a teacher for six years. In 1855 she established a school of her own, which was continued till 1875. Usually she had a partner, but her own personality was so strongly impressed upon it that it was always spoken of as "Miss Appleton's School." She was absent in Europe during the school year of 1865-66, and was again abroad after she finally gave up teaching ten years later. I have no account of her labors in Mr. Harding's school, but in her own more than four hundred pupils were first and last under her instruction. Were the list to be published, the names of all the families prominent in the city for the last forty years would be found in it. What impression she made upon her pupils is sufficiently shown by the proceedings of their meeting, published in the appendix to this sketch of her life.

Mr. Horatio Wood, of Lowell, Miss Appleton's partner in school for fourteen years, has, at my request, given me the following account of his association with her :

“ In September, 1861, I went to Cincinnati upon Miss Appleton's invitation to become her partner in the conduct of a school for girls, already established by her, and I remained with her until the school was given up in June, 1875. A private school requires of its head business capacity as well as skill in teaching, and Miss Appleton was an excellent business woman—energetic, prompt, systematic, exact; she had the faculty of accomplishing results by dint of forethought and hard work with a moderate expenditure of money. Still her frugality was not exercised at others' expense; teachers and others employed by her were well paid. Her own obligations were promptly discharged, and if others did not do as well by her, it was owing to no neglect or weakness on her part.

The same sense of justice and the same fidelity to duty, shown in Miss Appleton's business dealings, governed her conduct in the school-room. Her teaching was not the bare hearing of lessons. She went to her class-room with a full mind. In all the more advanced studies she gleaned from every field open to her whatever would serve to illustrate or explain the text-book, to interest or entertain her scholars. ‘How much Miss Appleton knows!’ said the girls. If all the books of extracts and of notes written out by her, all the photographs and other material used by her in teaching logic, literature, the history of various countries and of the fine arts, could be seen together, one could form some conception

of her tireless energy. I think it was not until just after she had started her own school that she made a serious study of the French language so as to acquire an exact knowledge of its grammatical rules and the ability to converse in it with ease. She sat in the French classes of her school as a pupil, and the teacher then employed by her, the scholarly Mr. Brunner, once acknowledged to me that he had learned much from her active presence of the efficient management of a class. Indeed, listlessness, the bane of the mode of teaching then in vogue, was hardly possible in her classes. In all her dealings with her scholars and their parents, she was simple and straightforward. There was nothing artificial, no assumption of moral or intellectual excellence; above all she could never bring herself to cry her own wares. When I first knew Miss Appleton, there were times when her masterful will was unduly stimulated by the opposition or by the inertness of others, but as time passed on, the rough edges of her character were smoothed away and her excess of strength became sweetness. She was never vindictive and cherished no enmities. She was too sensible of human weakness to resent long its manifestations. Very many of her pupils after leaving her school became her warm friends, and their kindly regard gave her great pleasure. Her affections were lasting and strong, stronger than many supposed; through them came her sorest trials. To repeat, her most striking characteristics were her sense of justice, her fidelity to duty, and her physical and mental vigor."

After her return from Europe, in 1876, she gave annually in her own house a course of lectures upon some literary or

artistic subject. In this way acquaintance with many old pupils was kept fresh, and her influence was felt by others who had not known her in their school days.

After her return from Europe, too, began her connection with our Society. She was chosen librarian at the annual meeting in December, 1876, and held this office for ten years. The Society then occupied rooms upon the upper floor of 'the College Building in Walnut street. In these rooms were crammed so many books and pamphlets that many of them were practically inaccessible. Here for nearly nine years Miss Appleton was daily to be found, doing what she might to record and make of use the constantly growing stores of the Society, looking forward hopefully to the time when we could have ample space in a building of our own. This time came in June, 1885, when the property now occupied by the Society was bought. I think she had already determined to give up the librarianship at some early time, but her ambition was now aroused; she would continue at her post until all the books and pamphlets were catalogued and arranged. When this task was brought to an end five years ago, she resigned her office in the Society, but kept up her interest and activity in it. For several years she passed one day each week in the rooms here and was besides busy at different times in several special departments of labor. So much had she to do with the present arrangement of this building that in these rooms, at least, almost without exaggeration, we might apply to her the well-known epitaph: "If you seek her monument, look about you."

In Mrs. Perry's "Sketch of the Women's Art Museum As-

sociation of Cincinnati," will be found the record of Miss Appleton's public labors for the culture of a taste for the fine arts. As early as 1854, she was prominent in the somewhat ambitious plans of Mrs. Peter "of founding and maintaining an academy of Fine Arts." In July of that year, she appears as one of the "Managers of the Ladies' Academy of Art in Cincinnati." I need not follow out the history of this society. When the "Women's Art Museum Association" was formed in 1877, Miss Appleton was chosen one of the two secretaries, a position she continued to hold until the dissolution of the association nine years later. This long service of hers in what became at last the Cincinnati Art Museum was touchingly ended by that clause of her will by which she leaves to the Museum five hundred dollars and such of her books and pictures as it may choose.

In 1880 was published in this city Miss Appleton's translation from the French of Karl Robert: "Charcoal Drawing without a Master." But many years before, in 1854, she had compiled a book called: "Insurrection at Magellan. Narrative of the Imprisonment and Escape of Capt. Chas. H. Brown," etc. In the preface she remarks: "I can claim no part [in this book] except that of collecting the facts from different sources, of arranging and compiling them." Later with characteristic frankness she adds: "Capt. Brown is answerable only for the facts; for whatever literary defects there may be, I alone am responsible." This book is well put together. Miss Appleton so thoroughly enters into the subject that without the preface you would never think the work written by another than Capt. Brown himself.

She contributed four articles to the Atlantic Monthly. The first of these, "Our Talks with Uncle John," appeared in August, 1868. The scene is laid in Cincinnati and Newport, and the local coloring is admirable. "A Venetian Experience," June, 1867, was written the year after her first visit to Europe. The latest of these magazine articles, "What Five Years Will Do," was in the November number for 1868. It may be called a war-story. By far the most interesting of these contributions was the second, published in February, 1864. It is entitled, "A Half-Life and Half a Life." Nobody can read this carefully without gaining new knowledge of Miss Appleton's depth of feeling and clear sense of duty. I have already referred to it as throwing light upon a certain portion of her life. The scene is for the most part upon the Big Sandy River, where she had passed the summer of 1863. This story has also been published in the collection called "Atlantic Tales" or "Classic Tales." I will quote a few sentences from its closing paragraph: "And now three months have passed, for two of which I have been teaching. There are difficulties, yes, and there is hard work; but I can manage the children. I have the tact, the character, the gift, that nameless something which gives one person control over others; and for the studies, they are as yet a pleasure to me. I see how they will lead me on to other knowledge, how I may bring into form and make available my desultory reading, and there is a great pleasure in the very study itself. And for the rest, if my great grief is never out of mind, if it is always present to me, at least I can put it back, behind my daily occupations

and interests. I begin, too, to see dimly that there are other things in life for a woman to whom the light of life is denied. My heart will always be lonely; but how much there is to live for in my mind, my tastes, my love for the beautiful! . . . No, I will not be unhappy; happy I suppose I can never be, but I have strength and courage, and a will to rise above this sorrow which once crushed me to the ground. When I wrote the bitter words with which this record begins, I wronged the kind hearts that are around me. I lacked faith in that world wherein I have found help and comfort."

All these tales will be found interesting by Miss Appleton's friends, not so much for the stories themselves as for the shrewd observations upon life, their pleasant sense of humor, and above all by their recalling so many of her familiar ideas and turns of expression.

After all it is not for what may be called Miss Appleton's public acts that we admire her. These were but the manifestations of character that it is allowable to speak of; they were a small part of what made her loved.

It never seemed to me that Miss Appleton had much interest in the ordinary works of charity in which women are engaged. She never opposed them, had in fact a sort of sympathy with them, but, to repeat, she had no interest in them. I think I have heard her regret this lack of interest as costing her a resource. Last winter, for instance, she cheerfully gave her lectures for the benefit of the Children's Home, but I suspect she would have felt herself wonderfully out of place in its board of management. This present year her lectures would have been in aid of the Training School

for Nurses, but of her own accord she would never have visited the Hospital to see what was doing. Her interests were intellectual, the societies which enlisted her sympathies looked to the cultivation of the tastes and to the growth of mind. She wished above all to help people to help themselves. Many a young woman who felt she had her own way to make in the world has been to her for advice. Her case would have careful consideration and the advice would be frankly given, though it might evidently be against the applicant's wishes, and the advice was given in a firm but kindly manner. Miss Appleton had an abhorrence of shams and a keen perception of them, a quick sense of the ridiculous and incongruous, but never willingly would she have hurt a person's feelings.

Her position as head of a prominent school made her acquainted with many teachers, new-comers to the city, both native and foreign. With these not advice only was needed. She did her best for them. A gentleman, now professor in an Eastern city, recently wrote to me: "Happy Miss Appleton, death came unawares, and with gentle fingers sealed her lips forever. For all that the news shocked and grieved me. She was a friend to me when friends were few. Then the idea that she might die never entered my mind. She lived so quietly, so far from the tussle and fever of the madding crowd, that it seemed she might go on and outlive the youngest. I owe her a great deal."

What is the great lesson to be derived from her life? Is it not the worth of simplicity and the honest following of one's own ideas of the right? She came here in 1849 almost a

stranger. Without the influence of family or of wealth, what a position she made for herself, what a powerful factor she was in the intellectual growth of our city. Without pretense, without striving for effect, she walked the even path of duty. To use the apt quotation of Mr. Goddard at her funeral: "She hath done what she could."

PUPILS' MEETING.

The following invitation explains a meeting which was held Thursday, February 19, at the rooms of the Historical Society:

"You are invited to be present at a meeting of the pupils of the late Miss Appleton, to be held at the rooms of the Historical Society, 115 West Eighth street, Thursday afternoon, February 19, at 3 o'clock.

"The object of this meeting is to give some public expression of the sense of our indebtedness to her and of our sorrow at her death.

"We most sincerely hope you will be present.

"ALICE WILLIAMSON BOWLER,

"EMMA MENDENHALL ANDERSON,

"SARAH METCALF PHIPPS,

"CLARA CHIPMAN NEWTON,

"KATHRINE SEYMOUR DODD."

The meeting was called to order, and Mrs. Emma Mendenhall Anderson, was chosen Chairman; Miss Kathrine Seymour Dodd, Secretary.

The following Committee on Resolutions was then appointed: Mrs. Anna McDougal Lawson, Mrs. Julia Worthington Anderson, Mrs. Alice Williamson Bowler, Mrs. Florence Carlisle Murdock, Mrs. Emma Buchanan Holmes,

Misses Sarah Metcalf Phipps, Augusta Lawler Harbeson, Clara Chipman Newton, Mary Aubery.

During the withdrawal of the Committee on Resolutions, the Secretary read, by the kind permission of Mr. Eugene F. Bliss, the sketch of Miss Appleton's life, written by him and read at the annual meeting of the Historical Society, December 1, 1890.

The committee appointed to draft resolutions on the death of Miss Appleton reported as follows :

"Our loss is irreparable and the words from the pen of one of her pupils express so well what we all feel that we beg to submit them to the meeting as an expression from all our hearts:

"The pupils of Miss Elizabeth Haven Appleton earnestly desire to express the debt of gratitude and heartfelt devotion which they feel for their former teacher and friend; she is associated with the earliest recollections of their childhood—that period of life which every one recalls with such interest and affection. Apart from our parents, there is, perhaps, no form which rises so vividly before us as that of our beloved teacher.

"The sphere of teacher admits of such scope for influence, and the teacher is such a factor in the moulding and shaping of our lives that the value of such a mission can scarcely be computed. No one could have been more gifted and better qualified to fulfil this noble work than Miss Appleton. She had, to a rare degree, the faculty of imparting knowledge and of awakening interest and love of study in her pupils. By her admirable methods she not only trained the mind for careful and serious thought, but by her instruction in art and literature, she stimulated the imagination and cultivated an artistic appreciation tending toward that harmonious development which makes life so full of interest and beauty.

"Her discrimination in dealing individually with pupils was re-

markable, never descending to an impatient or angry word, but with a direct, dignified, gentle reproof, she recalled a wayward or delinquent pupil to that sense of right doing to which she was so loyal, and inspired a desire to live up to her own high standard of every walk and work in life.

"But if we respected and revered Miss Appleton as our teacher, still more did we love her as friend, counselor, and confidante. Who can forget the picture of that cheery school-room where, at the joyous recreation hour, Miss Appleton was no longer the teacher but the centre of a group of happy girls, eager to confide their little heart-secrets to an ear so willing and a heart so responsive; who could have been more sympathetic, more tender and considerate than our dear friend and teacher! Our love for her grew with our growth, and in mature and advancing years knows no wavering or shadow of change.

"It is with sad hearts and tearful eyes that we offer this loving tribute to her cherished and sacred memory.

"CINCINNATI, *February* 19, 1891."

ELIZABETH HAVEN APPLETON FUND.

Soon after Miss Appleton's death, the following circular was sent to all her old pupils whose addresses were known :

"Among the pupils of the late Miss Appleton, there has been manifested on every hand a wish to give enduring expression to their grateful remembrance and appreciation of her power in the intellectual growth of Cincinnati, of her wise and sympathetic counsel as teacher and friend, of her noble and inspiring life.

"In affectionate memory of her we have decided to collect a fund, to be given to the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio; this fund, of which the income only shall be annually expended, shall be known as "The Elizabeth Haven Appleton Fund for the Purchase of Books." This Society has been chosen on account of Miss Appleton's well-known interest in it. She was for many years its Librarian, afterward its Secretary, and at all times actively engaged in its work.

"We cordially invite you to unite with us in raising the proposed fund. Mrs. Louise N. Anderson has been appointed Treasurer, and will receive such subscription as you may see fit to send. Mrs. Anderson's address is No. 16, The Ortiz, Cincinnati.

"Yours, most sincerely,

"MRS. JOHN A. GANO,	MRS. JAMES H. PERKINS,
"MRS. F. G. HUNTINGTON,	MRS. A. HOWARD HINKLE,
"MRS. T. J. EMERY,	MISS NEAVE,
"MRS. W. W. SEELY,	MISS DAVIS,
"MRS. LOUISE N. ANDERSON,	MISS KEYS,

"Committee."

Liberal contributions were made in accordance with the terms of the circular, and the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio gratefully accepted the gift. At the present date, April 15, 1891, this fund amounts to \$2966.00.

